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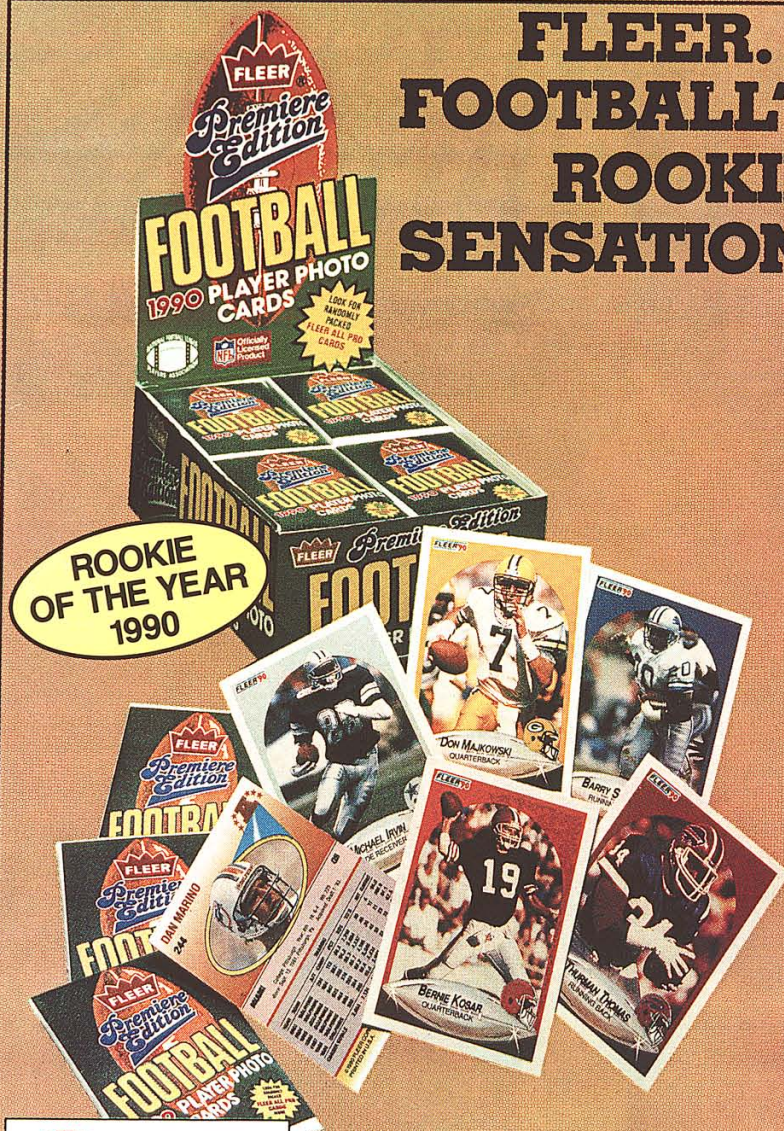
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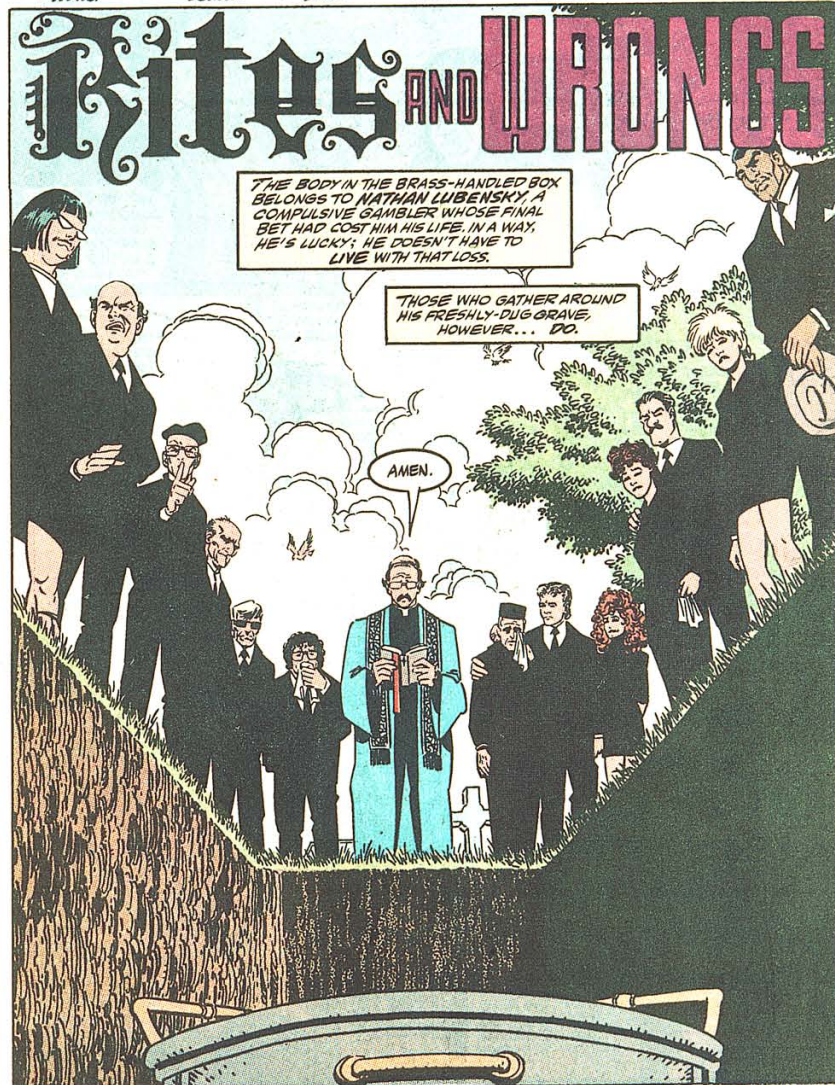
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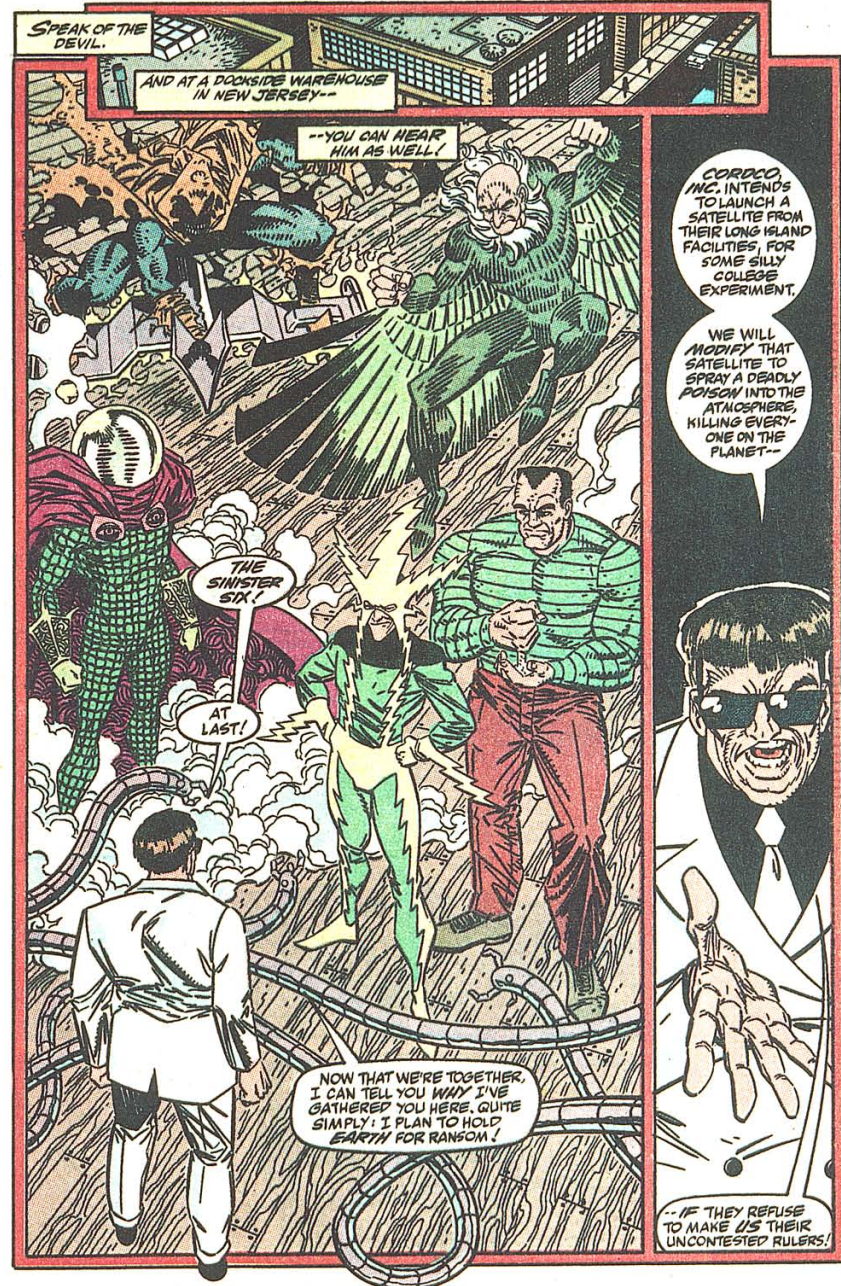
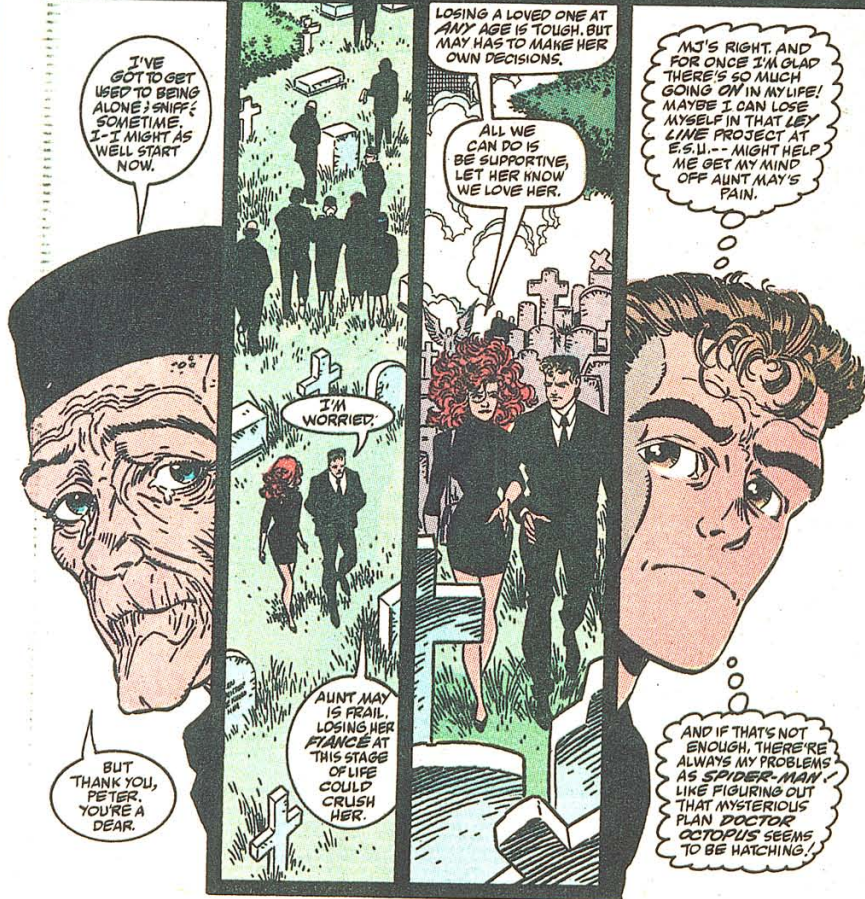
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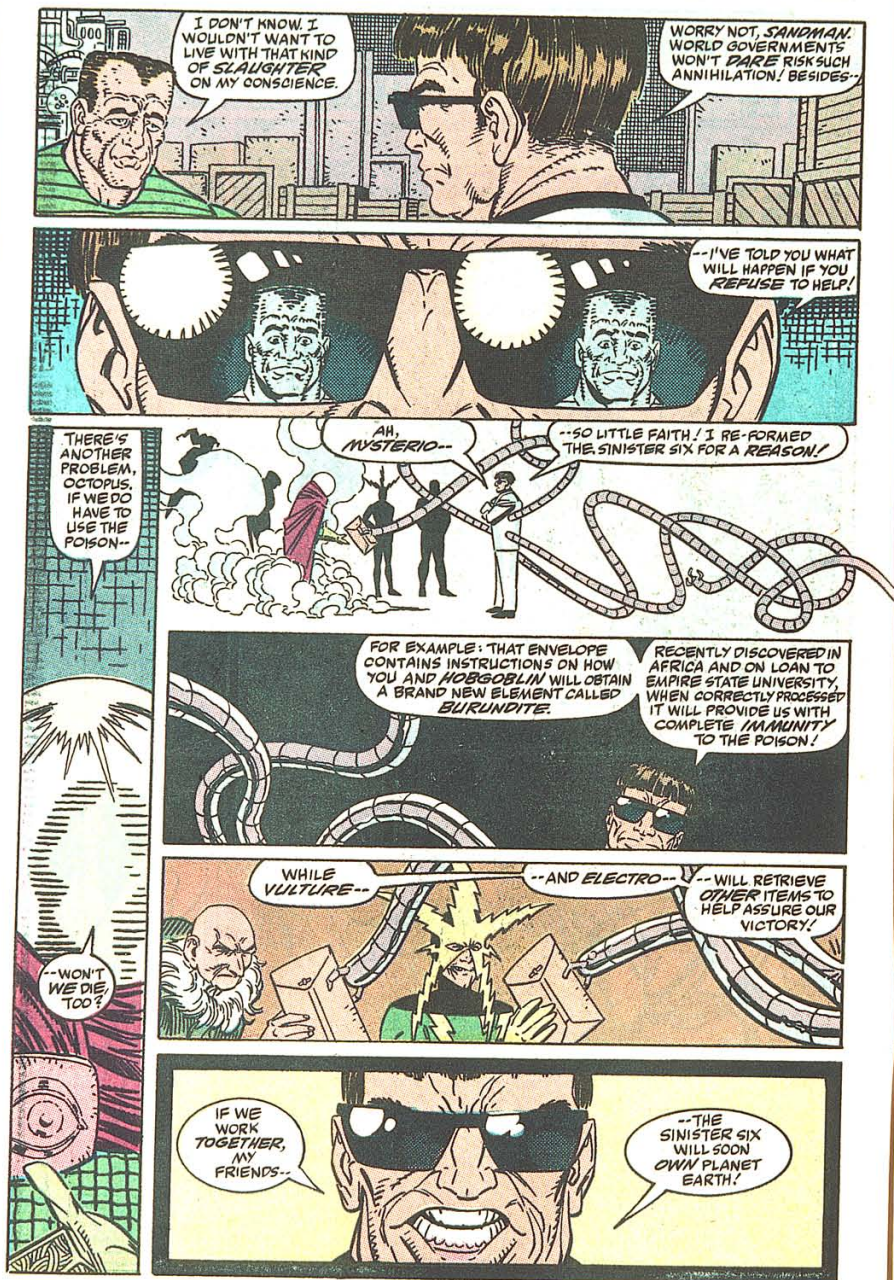
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THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN® Vol. 1, No. 337, Late August, 1990. (ISSN# 0274-5232) Published by MARVEL COMICS, James E. Galt, President, Stan Lee, Publisher, Michael Holston, Group Vice President, Publishing. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016. SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT NEW YORK, NY AND AT ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES. Published monthly except semi-monthly June, July and August. Copyright © 1990 by Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. All rights reserved. Price \$1.00 per copy in the U.S. and \$1.25 in Canada. Subscription rate for 12 issues: \$12.00 U.S., \$17.00 Canada, and \$24.00 foreign. Printed in the U.S.A. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the condition that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN (including all prominent characters featured in the issue and the distinctive likenesses thereof) are trademarks of MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, INC. POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO AMAZING SPIDER-MAN, c/o MARVEL COMICS, 9TH FLOOR, 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016.

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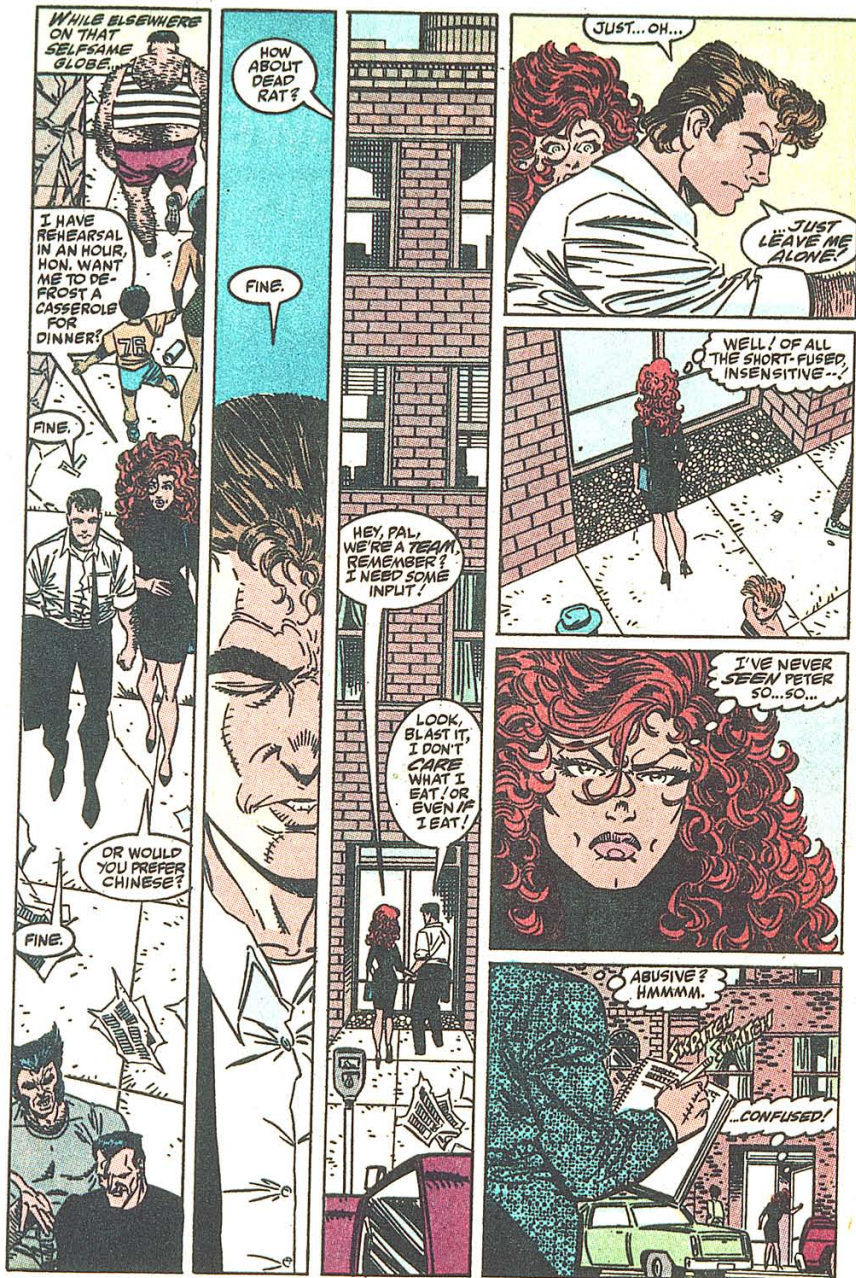
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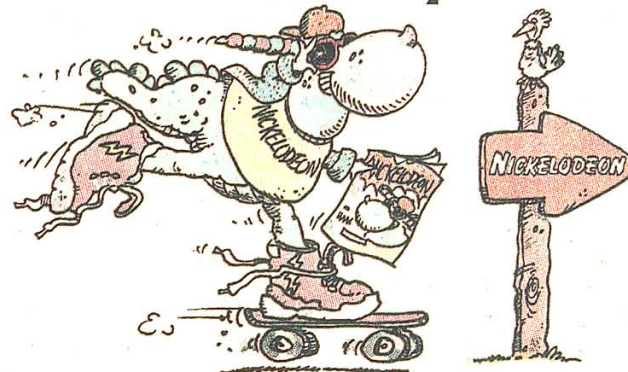
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TAR NB

BUT I'VE GOT PROBLEMS OF MY OWN! JONATHAN CAESAR, THE LUNATIC WHO KIDNAPPED ME, IS OUT ON BAIL! AND THE DIRECTOR OF MY SOAP OPERA WAS HOSPITALIZED IN AN "ACCIDENT" A FEW DAYS AGO! WHAT I DON'T NEED IS MY HUSBAND ACTING LIKE A JERK!

FEEL LIKE PUTTING MY FIST THROUGH A WALL, BUT A SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE IS GIVE AND TAKE!

PETER, I--

I'M SORRY, SWEETHEART. I'M JUST SO UPSET ABOUT AUNT MAY. I SHOULD NEVER HAVE TAKEN IT OUT ON YOU.

FORGIVE ME?

WELL, IF YOU PUT IT THAT WAY...

I GUESS I COULD BE PERSUADED.

COULD I PERSUADE YOU AFTER I GET BACK FROM SCHOOL?

DOC SWANN'S WAITING, AND I'M AFRAID LEX LYNES HAVE NO SENSE OF ROMANCE.

AW, OKAY.

GUESS IT'S MY TURN TO GIVE.

I'LL APOLOGIZE.

I'LL KEEP THE DEAD RAT WARM.

HUH?

SHE SMILES.

AND AT EMPIRE STATE...

WHAT A PRIVILEGE, BEING ONE OF THE FIRST TO EXAMINE BURNDITE! I--

-- EH? SMOKE! A FIRE!

NO.

FAS- CINATING!

...DO...

...WHAT- EVER...

...YOU...

...SAY.

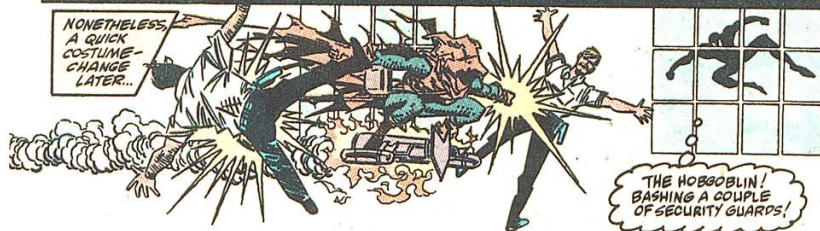
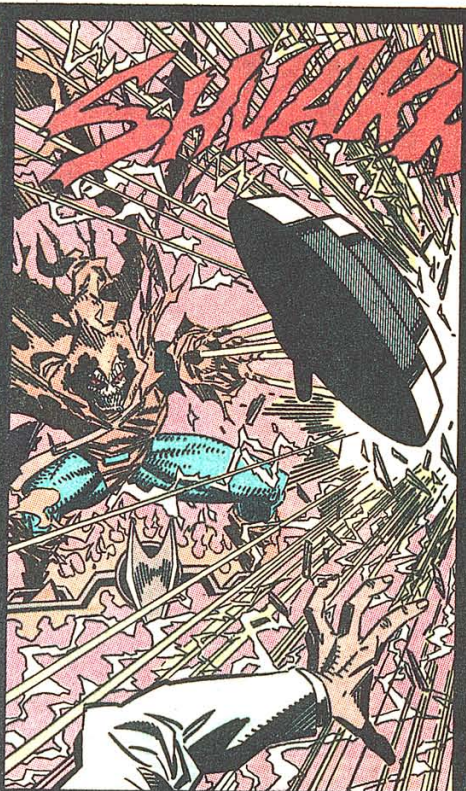
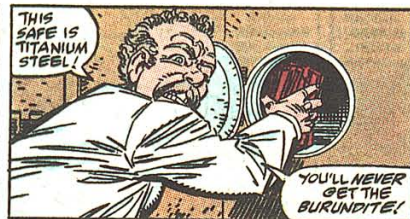
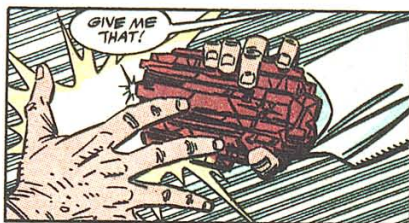
SEE, HOBGOBLIN? SUBTLETY IS THE KEY. THE HYPNOGENS IN MY CLOAKING MIST MAKE THIS RESEARCHER OUR SLAVE. ALL WE NEED DO IS ASK, AND--

DR. HATTON! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

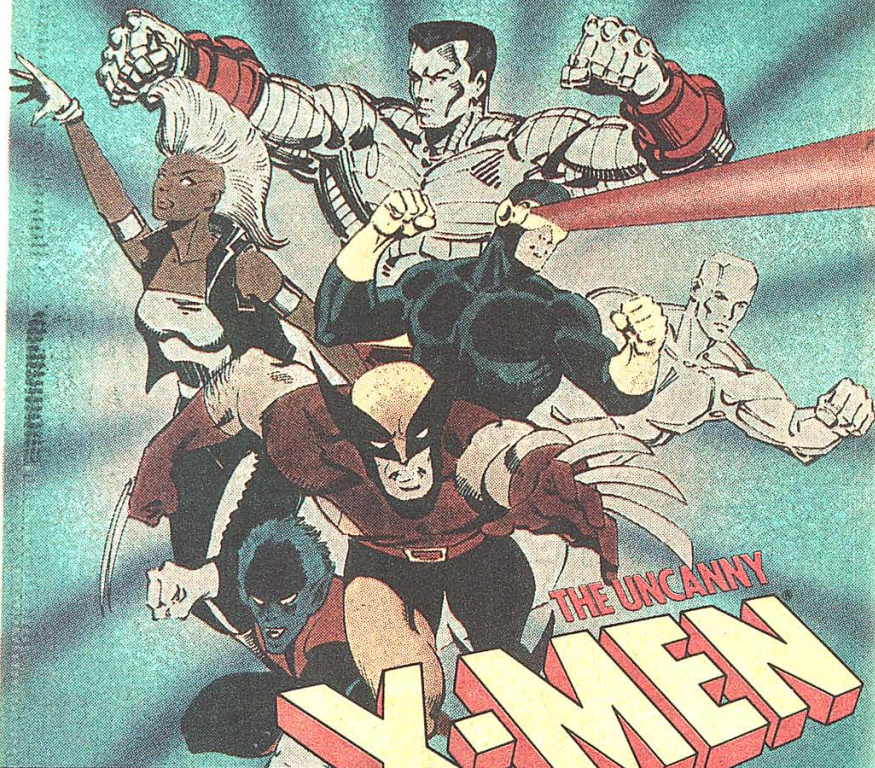
MERELY THE AUGUST ENTRANCE OF--

--MYSTERIO! NOW, HAND ME THAT CRYSTAL!

YOU'RE CRAZY! I'LL CALL THE POLICE! I...I-I'LL...



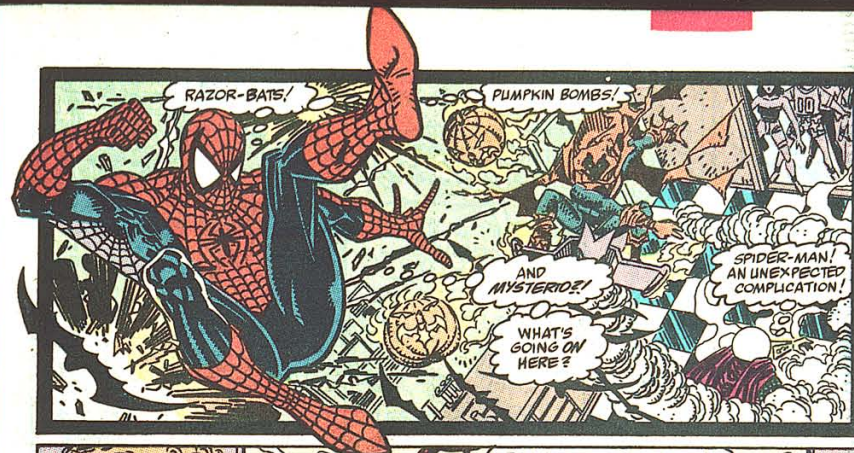
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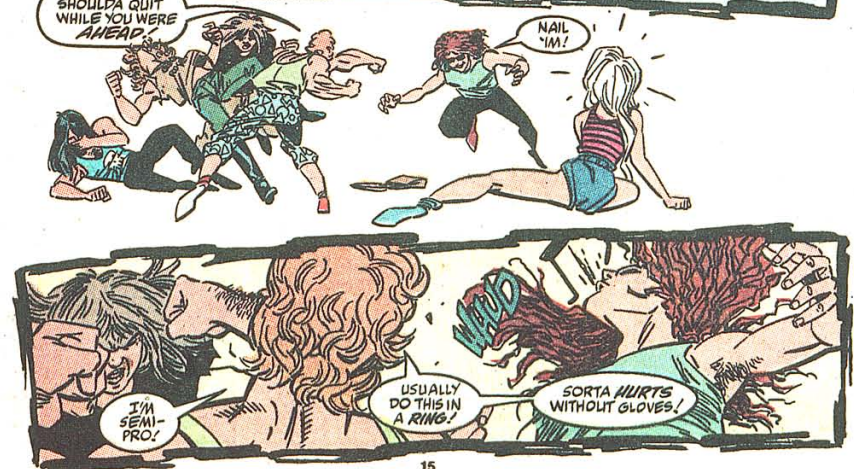
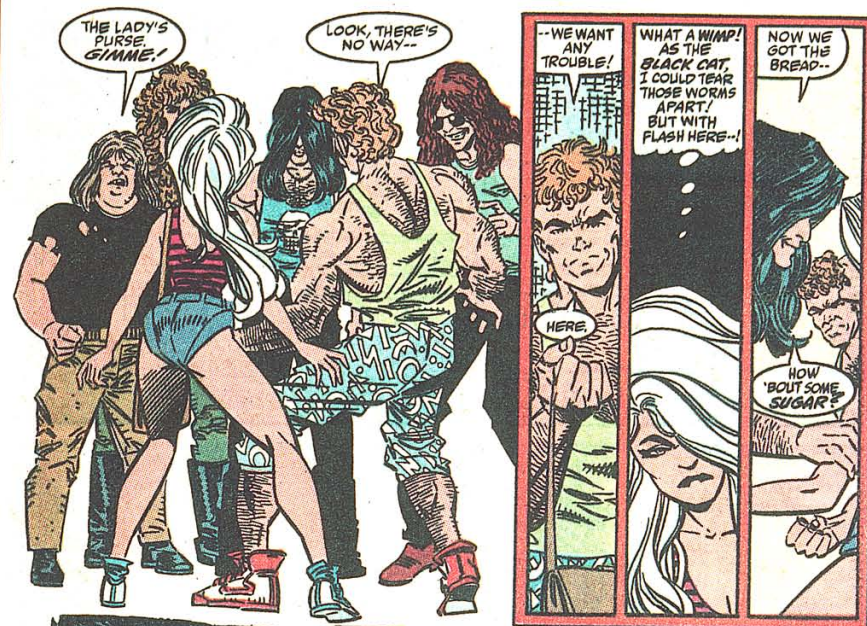
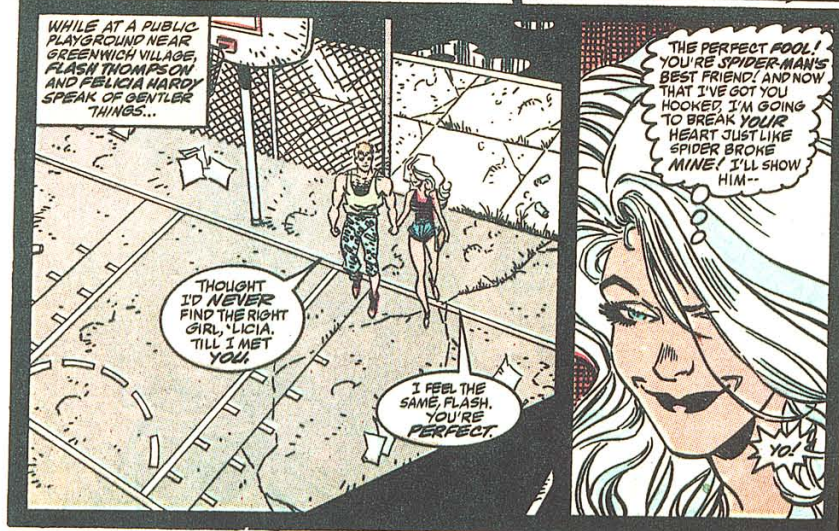
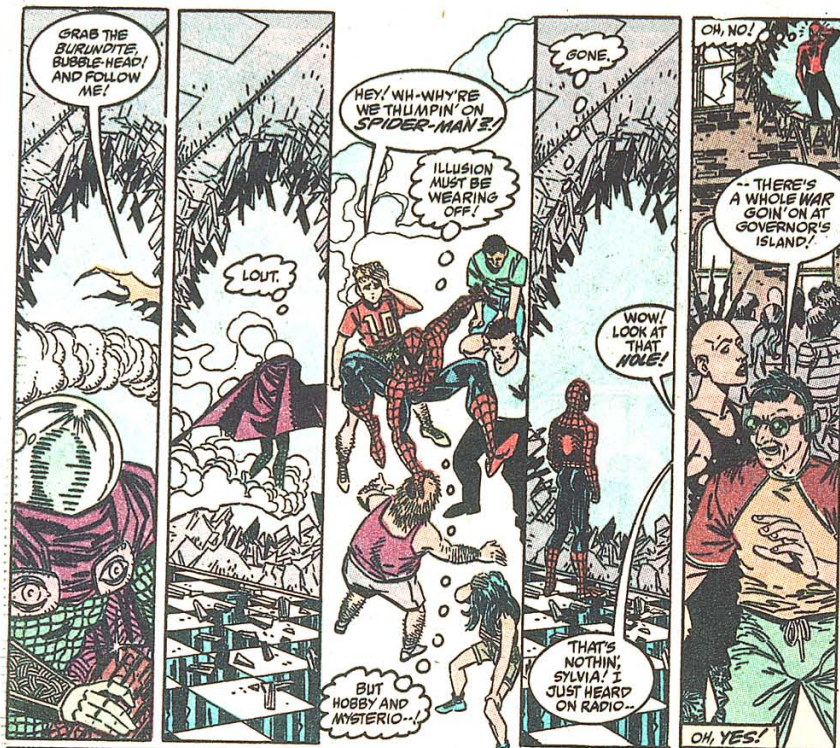
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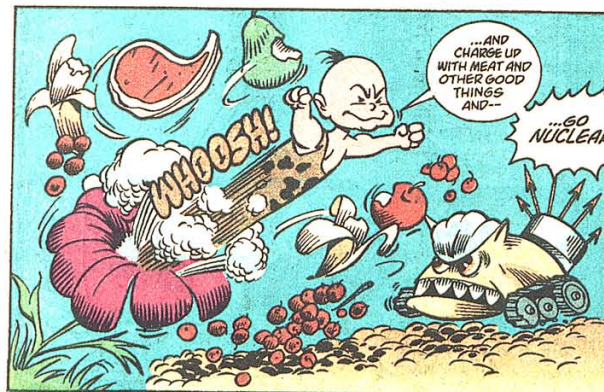
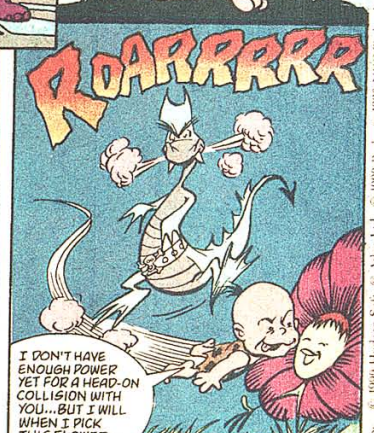
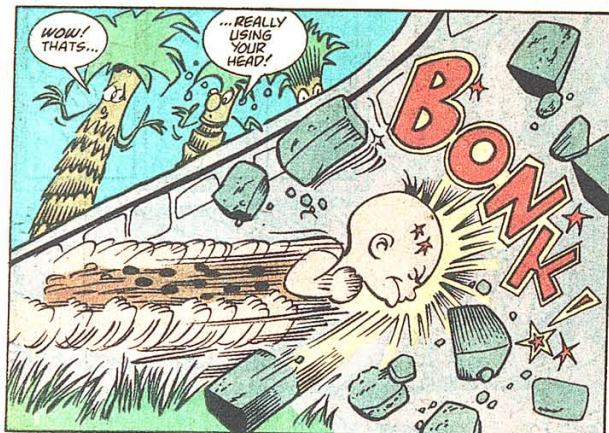
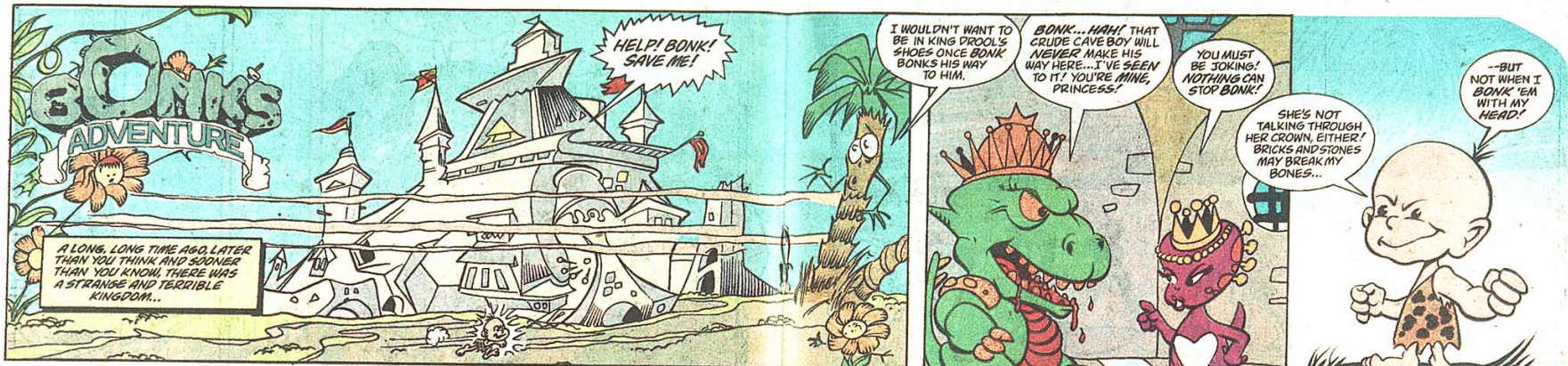
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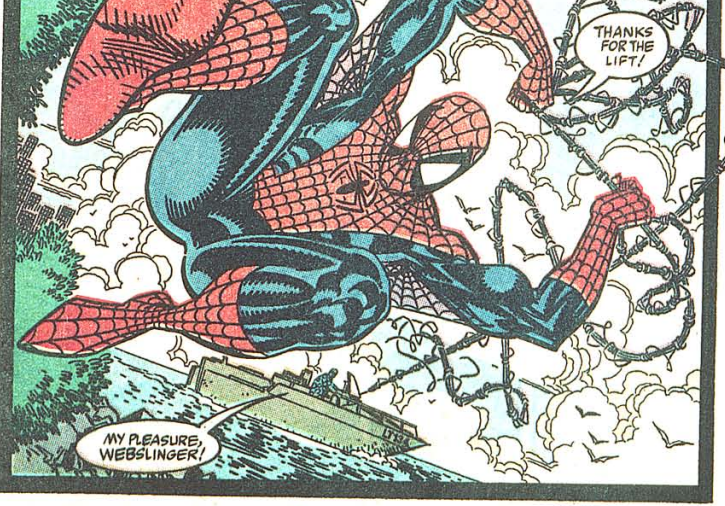
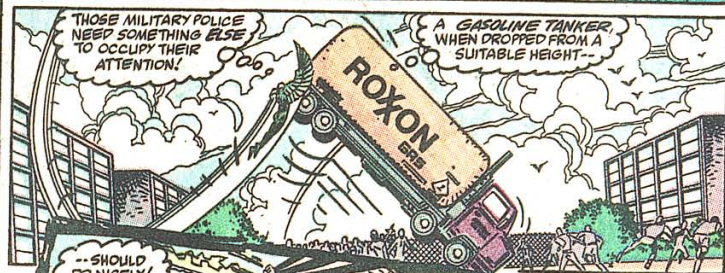
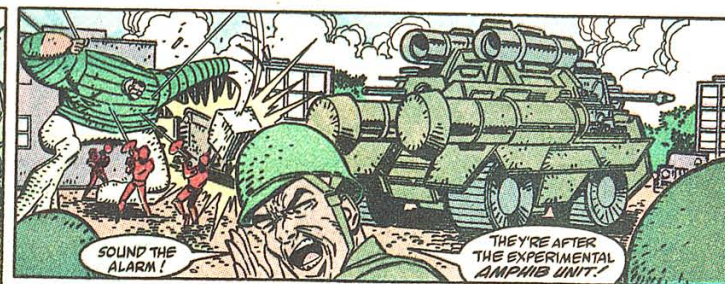
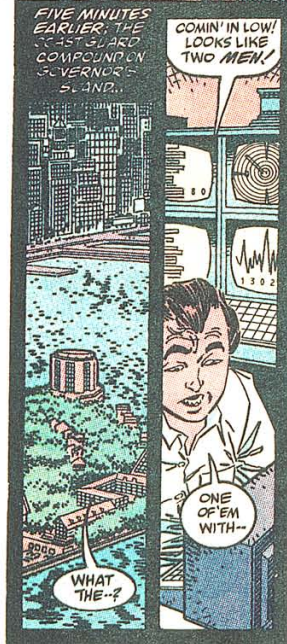


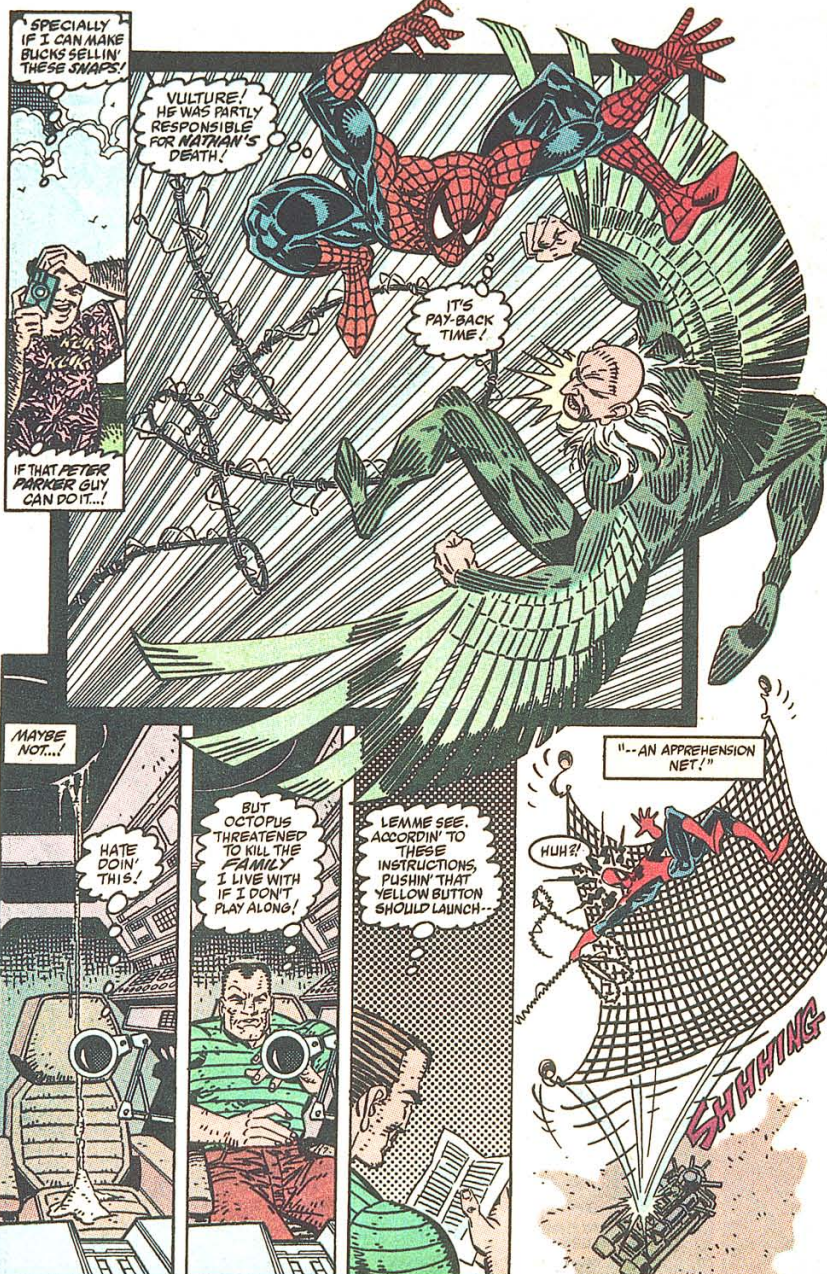
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IF THAT PETER PARKER GUY CAN DO IT...

MAYBE NOT...

HATE DOIN' THIS!

BUT OCTOPUS THREATENED TO KILL THE FAMILY I LIVE WITH IF I DON'T PLAY ALONG!

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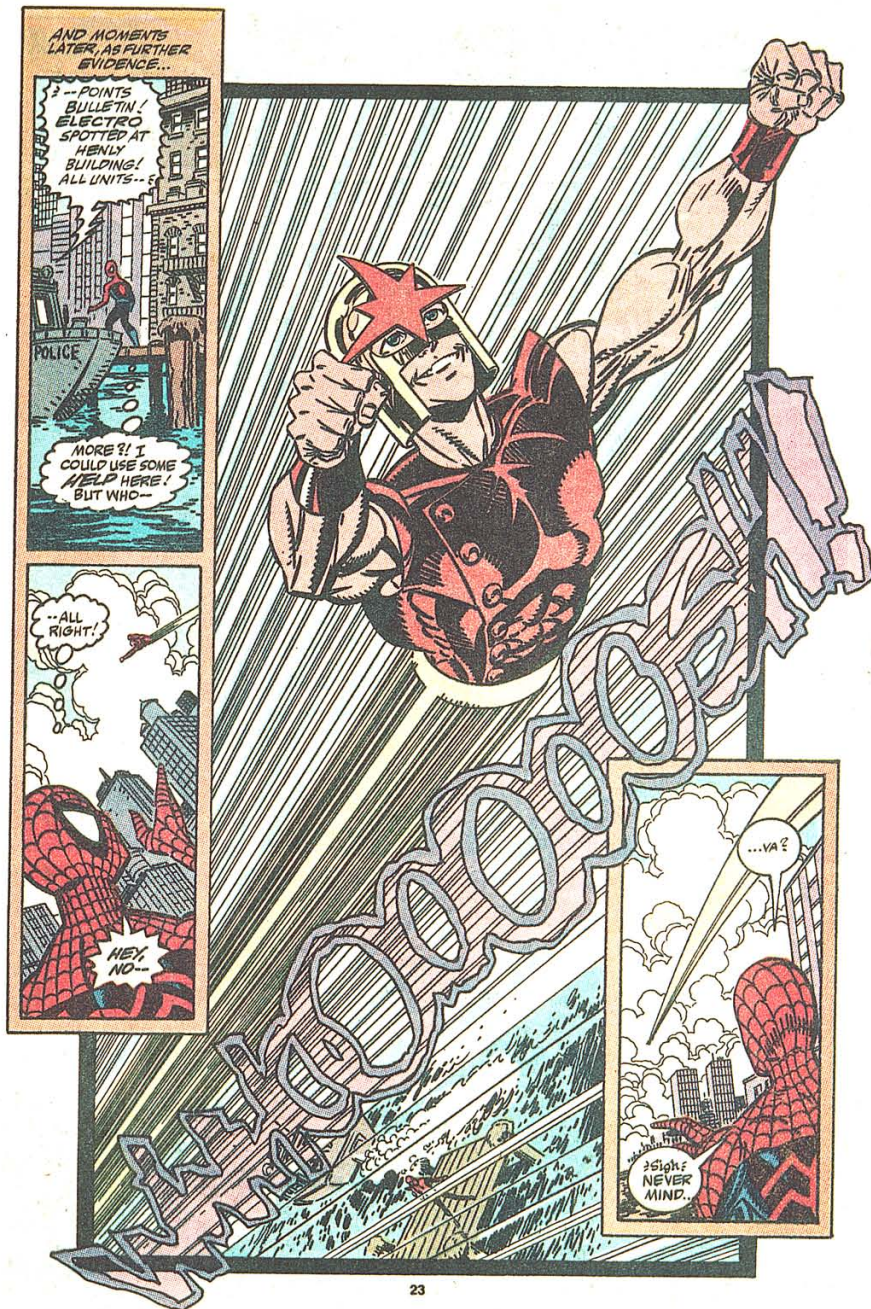
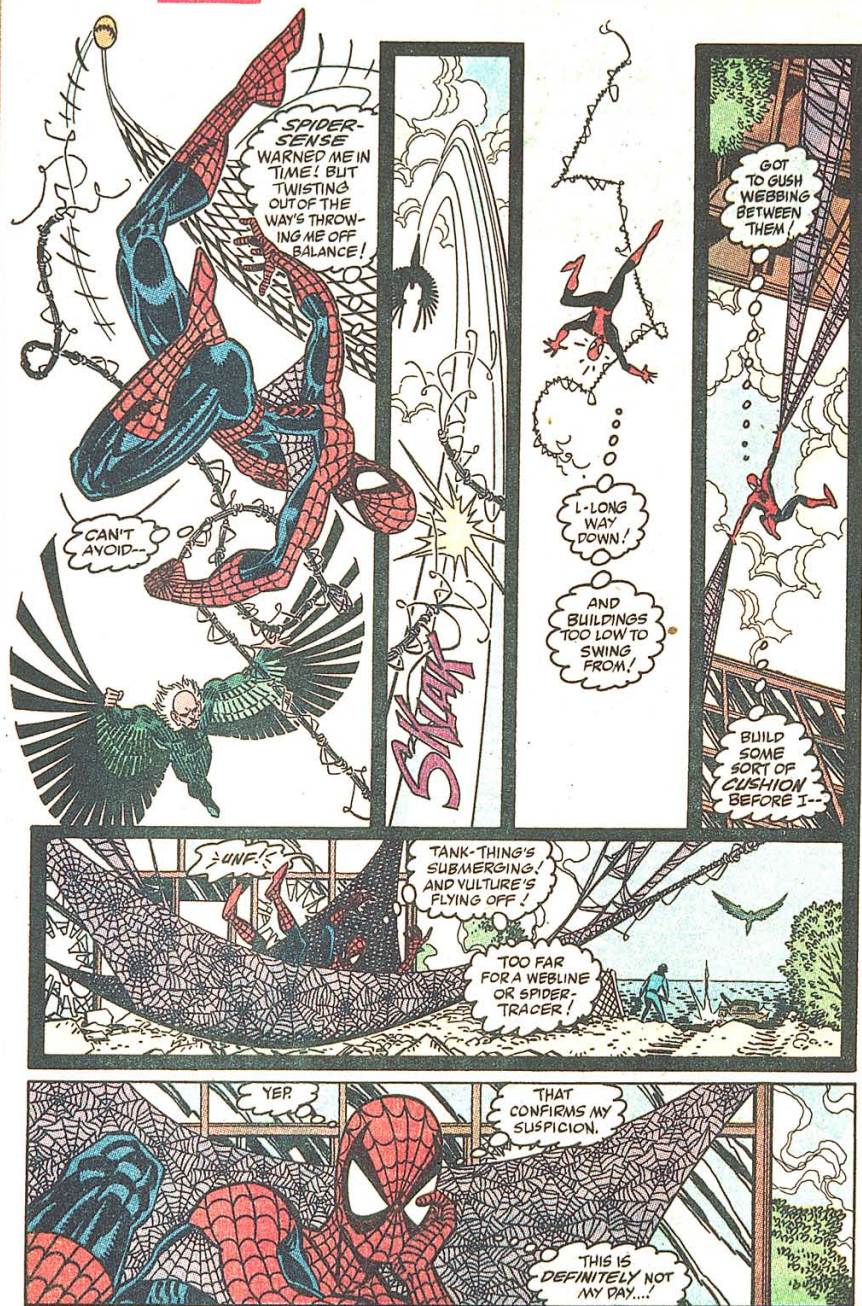
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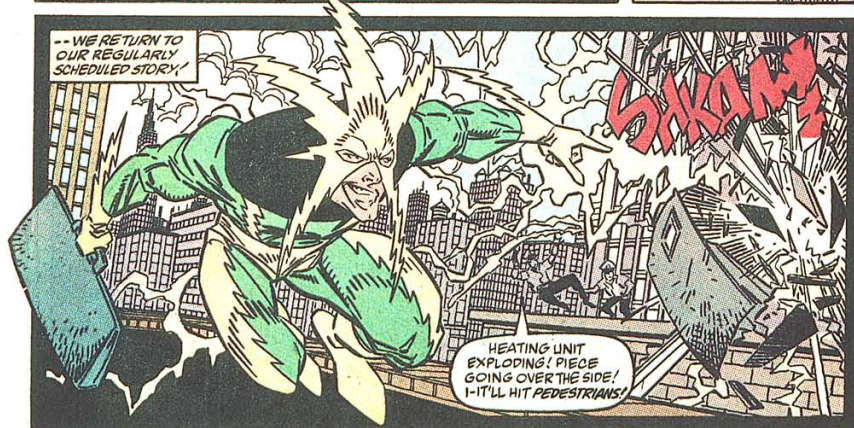
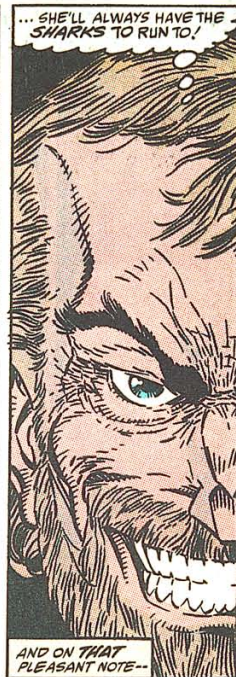
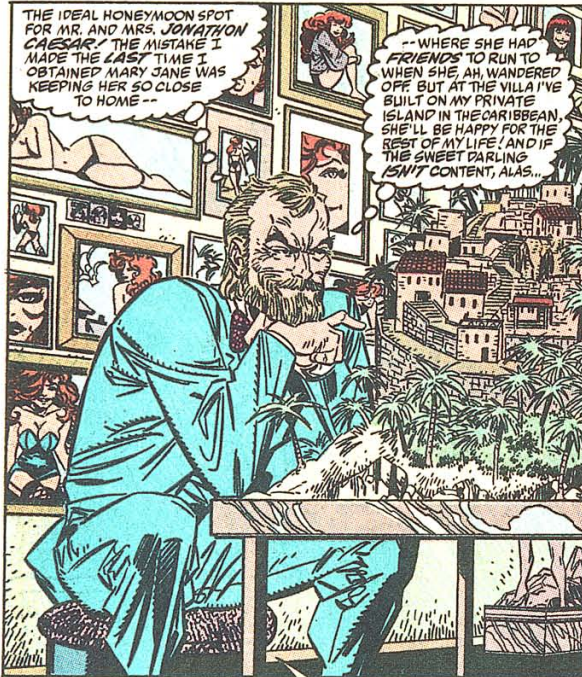
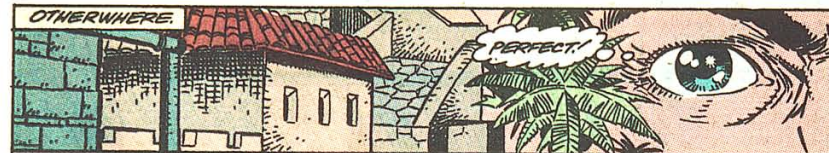
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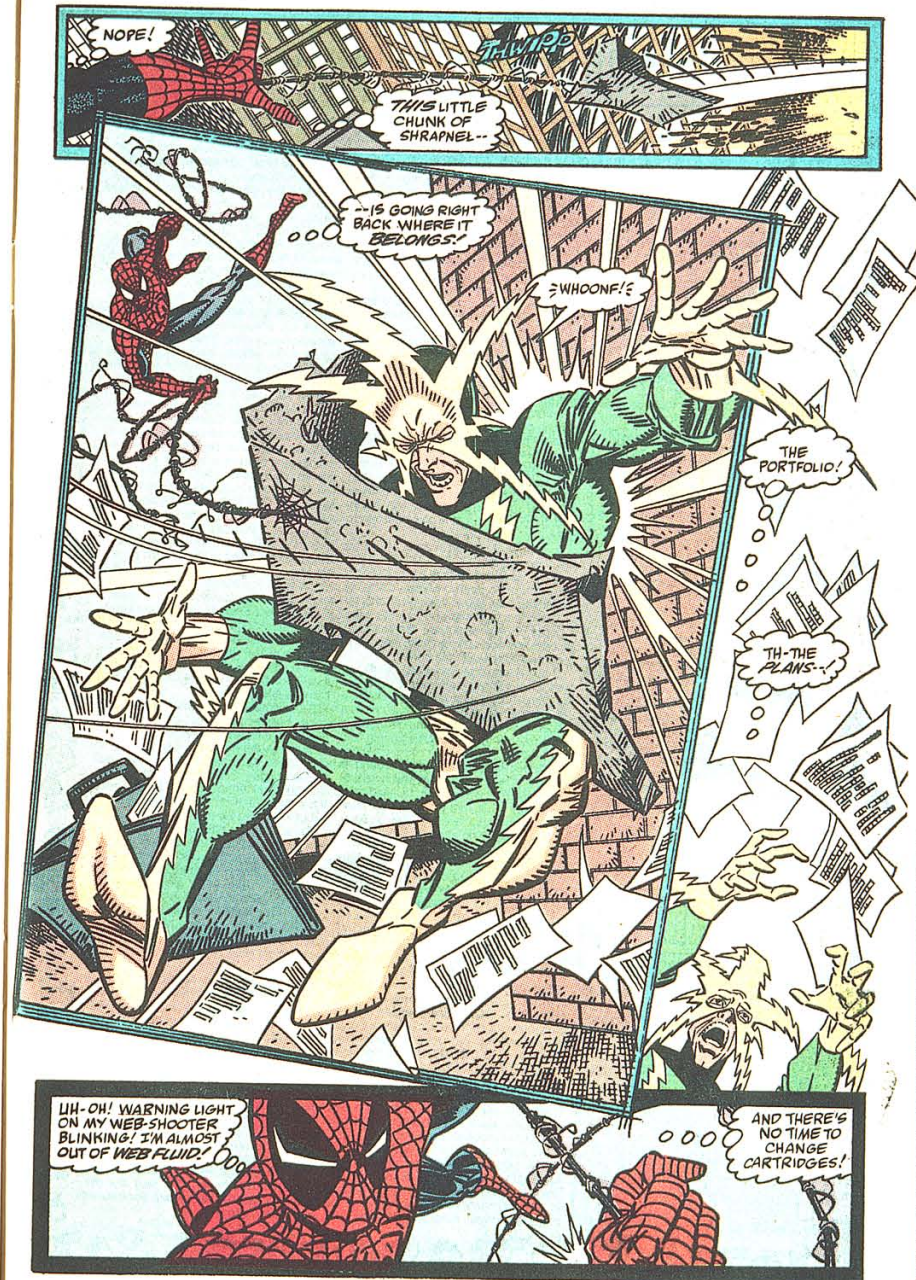
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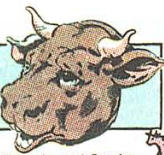


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25

MARVEL COMICS BULLPEN BULLETINS



STAN LEE'S SOAPBOX

Hi, Heroes! Wanna know why comic book column writers get gray? Try this on for size.

A few lashes back I told you to watch for "Into Thin Air," the new Larry Cohen movie in which some of our favorite Bullpenners play cameo roles. So far so good, right? Uh uh! Larry just told me the title was changed to "Ambulance" (Naturally, by the time he told me, the Soapbox column touting the other title had already been printed).

Well, to avoid any future foul-ups, just watch for a new thriller which may or may not be called "Ambulance," featuring my co-star, Eric Roberts ("Co-star"? Well, I share the screen with him for almost thirty whole seconds! And, in case you're wondering, yeah, he's pretty good, too!)

By the way, have you noticed the many new comic book titles and companies popping up? Recently, someone said he was sorry we're having all this competition. I told him to save his sympathy! I mean, competition is what it's all about! Nothing like the sound of another comics company breathing down our necks to make us work even harder! And who benefits by it all? Hey, who else but you, the readers; you, who keep us alive by shelling out your shekels for our mag! If we give you what you want, you'll buy us! If not, it's goodbye, Charlie! And that's the way it should be!

You've been wonderfully loyal to us over the years, and no words of mine can fully express our gratitude. That's why I make you this pledge—we'll never stop bustin' our chops to give you the best we've got, to prove worthy of your support, to excite you, to amuse you and, for better or worse, to always level with you! Fact is, there's no way we'll ever forget our earliest adage... "We're nothing without you!" Excelsior!

CHECKLIST

No checklist this month, Guys and Guernseys. If you want to find out what's on sale, check out last month's Bullpen Bulletins page. Meanwhile, here's some extra boxes you can practice checking off.

☒ GOOD

☒ BAD

JUNE, as hyperprolific Marvel Executive Editor-slash-Wisconsinite Mark Gruenwald always fails to remind us, is National Dairy Month. You know what that means? Yes, that's right, it's time once again for our first annual stroll around the Marvel neighborhood, to see how dairy products affect us in our everyday lives. Perhaps we should get ultrasonic dresser Assistant Editor Darry Butter (er, **Barry Dutter**) to accompany us on this little venture? Perhaps not.

The first stop on our sojourn is the local New York Smiler deli. We head toward the refrigerated dairy section in all its pre-packaged splendor. We spy the milk cartons, and are reminded of the happy days of our youth, reading comics by the fireplace, while sipping Bosco and milk. Not everyone has had so fortunate a childhood, however, and Marvel has recently been trying to do something about it.

Marvel has joined forces with the National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse and the K-Mart Corporation to produce a comic book featuring **Spider-Man** and **Skids** of the New Mutants, dealing with child abuse. The comic will be distributed through K-Mart, and given out free to any parent who asks for it.

The comic came out in April, which, as neo-father-slash-GHOST RIDER-writer Howard Mackle could tell us, is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. Certainly preventing child abuse is a high priority for all of us, parents and non-parents alike. Another priority, of course, is reminding children and non-children alike that milk is good for strong teeth and bones.

One guy who draws excellent teeth and great bones is megastar Jim ("Don't call me happy" Lee. (No relation to Stan.) If Jim were a happy guy, he'd really have a reason to smile now, since he is now regular pencil of the X-MEN, beginning with issue #268.

Todd McFarlane, on the other hand, is always happy to smile for us. The incredibly popular squiggly-web-drawing Canadian is giving birth this month to a new book featuring the adjective-less **Spider-Man**. Todd is both writing and drawing this one, surely cause for a celebration. Tell Aunt May to stock up on extra milk and cookies!

Well, we've lingered over the dairy counter so long the shop owner is beginning to stare at us in a peculiar way. Let's move on. As we reach the check-out counter, we spot the latest issue of the mucho-informative, ultraprestigious SOAP OPERA WEEKLY magazine. We can't help but recall the April 10th issue of SOW, which featured an interview with the second lady of American theater, Elaine Lee. (No relation to Stan.) Elaine spoke of her erstwhile role on the more-than-a-soap-opera-more-like-a-dramatic-ongoing-story TV show, **THE DOCTORS**, and her work on the if-comics-could-sing-the-world-would-sing-with-them **STEELTOWN ROCKERS**. Although Elaine made no mention in dairy products in the interview, we have to wonder if the thought of them might have crossed her mind.

We are reminded of the Wall of Bovines in the office of Epic's own super hard-working assistant editor, Marie Javins. Marie has had some of the biggest names in the business contribute drawings of cows to her wall. Among them: Jim Lee,

Jay Muth, Mike Mignola, and Sergio Aragones. Now you see why it's called the Marvel Bullpen.

We exit the New York Smiler, and continue our stroll around the Marvel neighborhood. What's playing at the local theater? **THE STORY OF CHEESE**, perhaps? No, that was last week. This week, it's **ROBOCOP 2**, co-scripted by the hyperhot he-was-doing-ninjas-when-ninjas-weren't-cool Frank Miller. We are reminded of our comics adaptation of this ultraprofane film, which we might urge you to pick up, if you need your US RDA of lip-puckering, justice-dispensing cyborgs. It's by Alan Grant, Mark Bagley, and Tony DeZuniga—all firm believers in the separation of the four basic food groups.

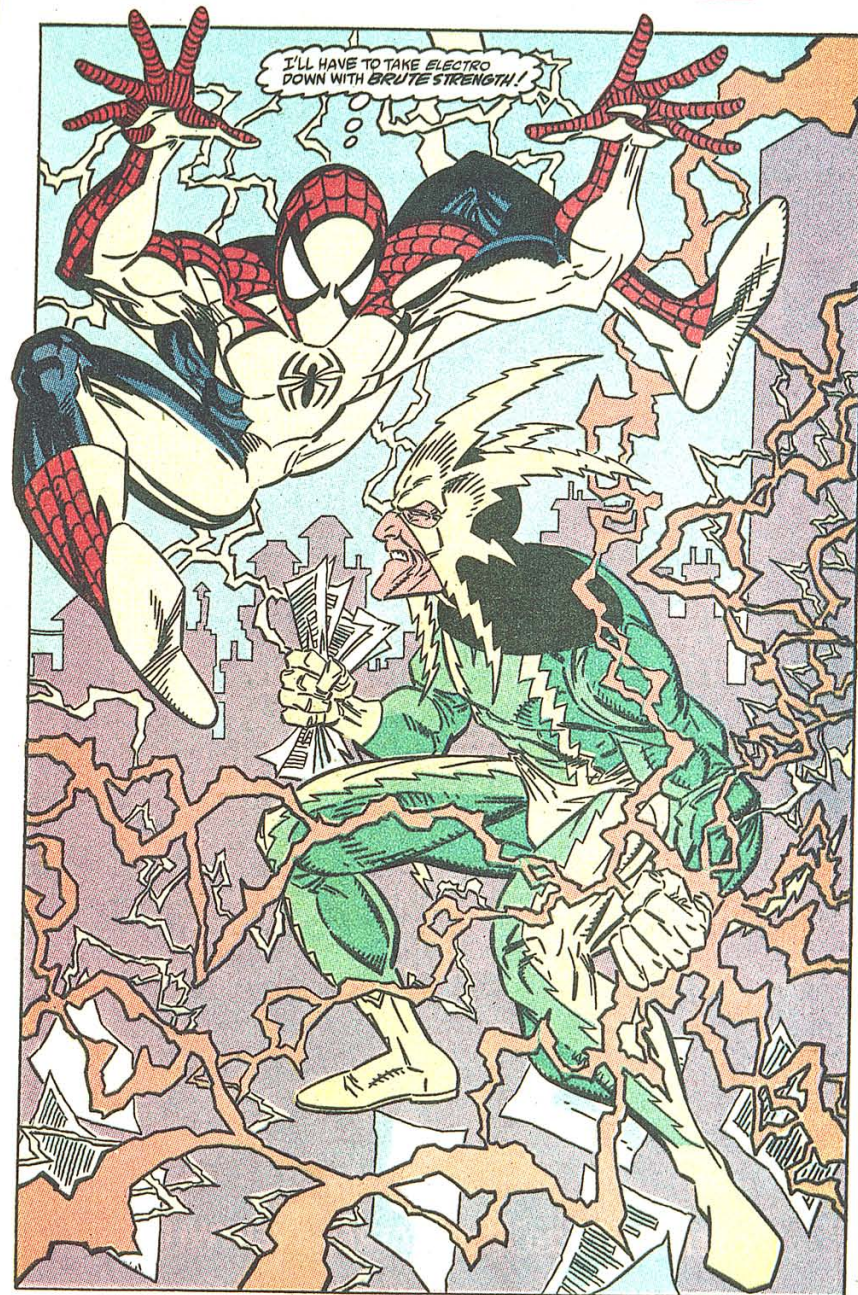
Why, look! It's a record store! Wasn't there a mega-groovy group a few decades back known as the **Cowsills**? Why, sure there was! Maybe we can score one of their old albums on compact disc. While our fingers browse almost of their own accord, we happen upon the brand-new CD by the not-quite-yet-but-soon-to-be-superstars **Otis Ball and the Chain**. The album is called "I'm Gonna Love You 'Til I Don't," and it features back-up vocals on one song by the Buddha Singers. As fate would have it, three of the Buddha Singers are Marvel's own—the tow-headed neo-Editor Mike Rockwitz, colorist-par-excel-lence Steve Buccellato, and our smiling Direct Sales Manager Lou Bank. As Lou described it, "Otis serenaded us outside our window, and this inspired us to sing with him. It was one of the most sentimental moments of my life." Lou predicts that Otis Ball and the Chain will be "bigger than the sliced wheel."

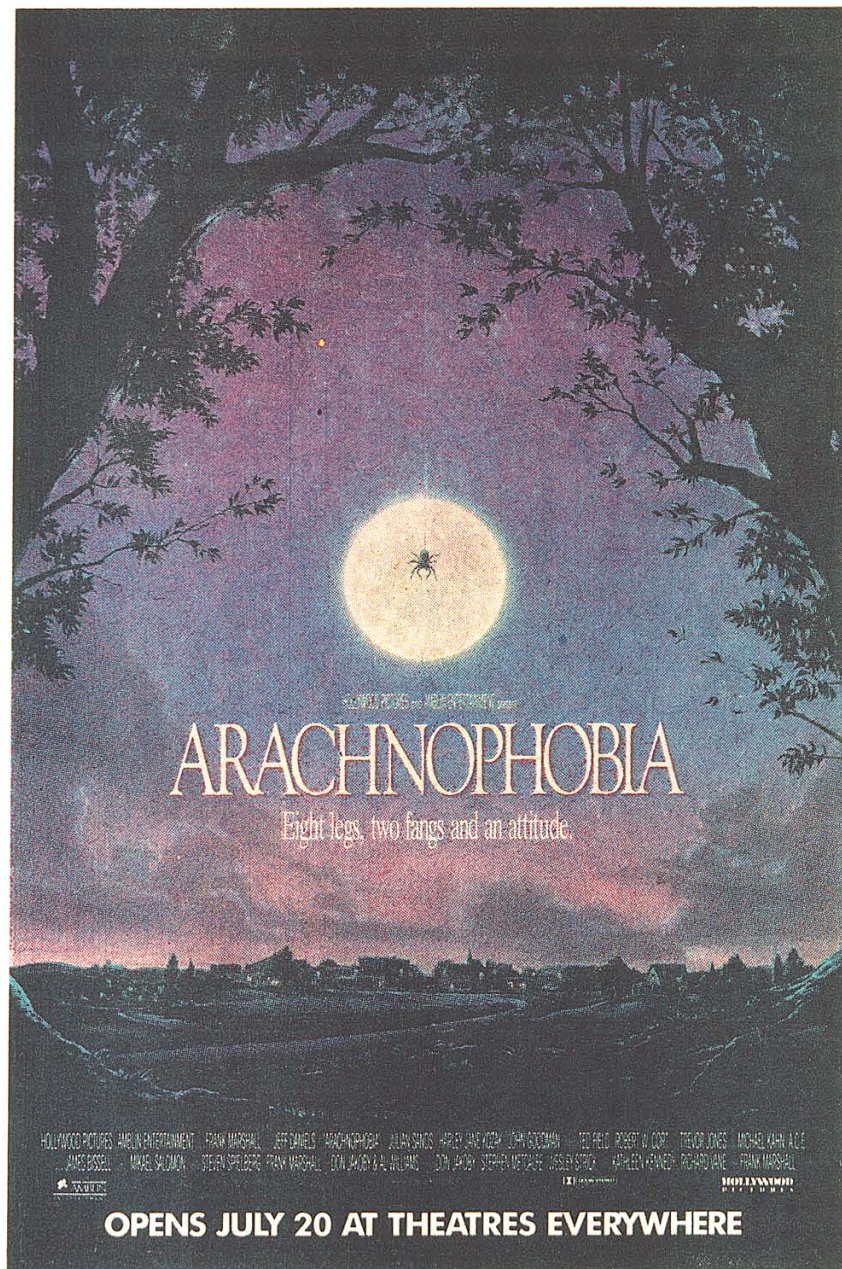
Sliced wheel? A probable cheese reference. Further proof that dairy products have become part of the American culture. Why, someone would have to be a fool to not include dairy products as part of his/her everyday diet. Which reminds us, appropriately enough, that June is also the release of the first issue of the **FOOL-KILLER** Limited Series.

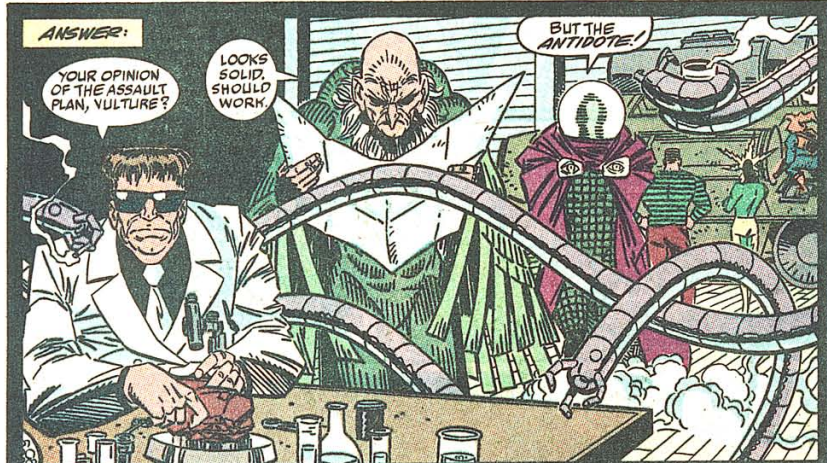
It's scripted by ultra eccentric Howard the Duck creator Steve Gerber, with art by the meta-talented newcomer to Marvel, JJ Birch. Steve created the Foolkiller character in the early seventies in an issue of his mucho-classic **MAN-THING** series. Now there's a whole new nutcase in the Foolkiller suit, and he's re-defined the meaning of the word "fool." We wonder if this might include those who don't drink their milk!

Well, it's getting late, and our trip 'round the neighborhood has come to an end. We're tired—but it's a good kind of tired. As we reflect back on our day, we can't help but realize what a large role such products as cheese, butter, and milk play in our lives. But some of us enjoy them perhaps a little too much. In a recent study, it was revealed that Wisconsin adults weighed in as the nation's most obese in a national survey—for the third consecutive year! The reason for their pleasant plumpness? Seems it's their high consumption of dairy products like cheese and butter. Perhaps there's a lesson to be learned here. (Say, isn't it pre-obese non-serial killer Mark Gruenwald from Wisconsin?)

Gotta scoot!







NEXT ISSUE: FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER-- SPIDER-MAN vs. THE ENTIRE SINISTER SIX! AND TO THE WINNER... THE WORLD!

THE SPIDER'S WEB

% MARVEL COMICS GROUP
387 Park Avenue South
New York, New York 10016

JIM SALICRUP
ARACHNERD
DAN CUDDY
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Attention correspondents: All letters considered for publication must include your name and address, though we will withhold that information upon request.

Dear Jim,
AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #330 was a poor issue of what is normally an excellent title.

There are two reasons for my opening comment, the first of which can be summed up in two words: The Punisher. I know he is one of Marvel's most popular characters, but I find him a mere stereotype and an excuse to glorify mindless violence. Take the last two images on page 25, for example. Can we really consider this to be acceptable comic book storytelling? I think not! Having Spider-Man work alongside him is incredible. Shouldn't the Peter Parker we all know and love at least turn his back on such a vigilante, if not hunt him down as the killer he is?

My second disappointment with this issue was the art. Mike Machlan's inks just didn't work with Erik's pencils. The whole issue looked rushed and scratchy. Please don't let us see this combination again.

Martin Simcox
84 Barnett Lane
Worsley, Stourbridge
West Midlands, DY8 5PX

Sorry you felt that way about this issue, Martin. But there are some people who don't share your views about the Punisher's *modus operandi*...

Dear Editors,

Toward the end of issue #330, "The Powder Chase," a man has just shot at the Punisher with the intent to kill him. The Punisher retaliates by blowing the man away. And Spider-Man has the guts to say, "Did you have to do that?" What did he expect the Punisher to do--wait for the punk to blast his head off? Some Marvel characters do not have special web-fluid to subdue their opponents. I can't see any reason why the Punisher shouldn't have shot the man.

Joseph Olszewski, Jr.
2802 Shelley Road
Philadelphia, PA 19152

Your letter touches upon a very sensitive controversy, Joseph--does a person have a right to take the law into his own hands, especially when he feels his life is at stake? Spider-Man follows a strict moral doctrine that would not permit him to kill a fellow human being no matter how corrupt that person may be. But like you said, not everyone has web-fluid and the ability to dodge bullets. Makes you wonder what Peter Parker would do if placed in a similar circumstance without his powers, doesn't it?

Dear Jim,

Much as I like the work that Michelinie is doing on AMAZING, I find it necessary to convey how much I detest the artwork. Issue #330 has got to be the worst art that I have ever seen on this book, and I have been reading Spidey since the 60s during the Romita era. Please--find a replacement, or ask Larsen not to make these characters look like such caricatures.

M.D. Garner
Box #20959
Long Beach, CA 90801

Not everyone feels the way you do about Mr. Larsen's portrayal of your favorite characters, M.D. ...

Spider-Staff,

Issue #330 was great! The subject of drugs is a very relevant one these days and the Punisher fits right into such a storyline. However, it is the art which I find intriguing.

Larsen's style is paradoxical in that it is constantly fluctuating from a look that borders on the absurd, to a look that is wonderfully realistic and visually appealing. Pages 9 and 11 are a good example of this change in the artwork. This alternating style effectively integrates all the world's complexities and absurdities into the comic, making the end product rather interesting!

Similarly, there is a noticeable difference between the portrayal of scenes that take place during the day and those that take place during the night. The night ones are much more effective because they make use of devices like shadows and lights and create a mood. If the same sort of thing could be worked on for the day scenes, the comic would have even better than it already is!

Thanks for keeping Spider-Man's character consistent! His aversion to senseless killing and his enduring wit are all part of his charm!

Colin Stevenson
Toronto, Ontario

And if Colin's letter doesn't convince you, M.D., how about this one...

Dear Jim and Dan,

I won't bother praising the artwork of issue #330; considering I am writing about AMAZING SPIDER-MAN, I would think that redundant. Allow me to plunge into my comments about the story.

I was glad to see the Punisher return to the pages of his origin, he always works well with Spidey and his reappearance was long overdue (I believe he last surfaced in issue #202). In this short 'em up, non-stop action thriller, both the web-slinger and Mr. Castle's distinct personalities were portrayed expertly. I particularly enjoyed Erik Larsen's rendition of both characters' facial expressions as indicators of moods. For example, through his countenance, Spider-Man's reverence for human life was evident, as was the Punisher's contempt for the criminal element he combats. Mr. Larsen is proving himself a worthy successor to Todd McFarlane.

Eddie Brock dead? WOW! A most stunning development... however, I'd be willing to wager his deadly alter-ego will be back. Good going gentlemen!

Ariel Carmona, Jr.
616 1/2 N. Harvard Blvd.
Hollywood, CA 90004

As you've no doubt discovered by now, Ariel, it's not Eddie Brock we should all mourn but his alien symbiote!

Gentlemen,

You guys deserve plenty of compliments for your great meddling in Peter Parker's life, but you can hear those from most of your other readers. So what am I here for? I'm going straight for a No-Prize, of course.

ASM #330, the teaser interlude on page 15, panel 3: One of the Guardsmen yells an order to "Shut off the sonic barrier guarding the door!" before entering Eddie Brock's cell. This is an apparently pointless breach of security, since only the alien is sensitive to the sonics and others can pass through the sonic wall unaffected (ASM #315, page 1, panels 4-5). Why bother canceling the sonics when that caused Venom's earlier plan to escape to succeed?

The answer: Unlike the pre-Armor Wars suits, the recently unveiled (AVENGERS SPOTLIGHT #29) Guardsmen Mark II suits now employed at the Vault can be effected by the sonics. My guess is that the barrier would disrupt the suits' short-range broadcast power reception. (When Tony Stark designed the Mark II, he failed to include an internal power source so that the suits could never be used outside of the Vault). According to Iron Man, the suits' juice comes from power strips built into the Vault itself, but I doubt the cells themselves are equipped with these.

Do I get a No-Prize? Please?

At any rate, thanks for bringing back Venom--or at least the alien, since it's apparently gone AWOL without the late (!?) Mr. Brock.

Scott E. Tate
P.O. Box 342
Monte Vista, CO 81144

Can't believe they fell for the ol' "Shut off the sonic barrier" schtick again, eh, Scott? Well, how intelligent can a person be whose line of work is guarding the most dangerous supervillains in the world?

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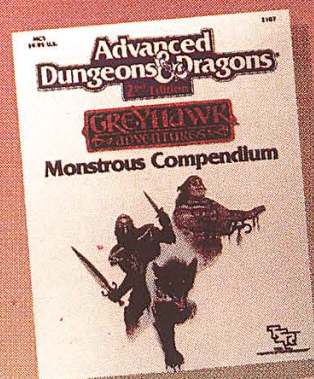
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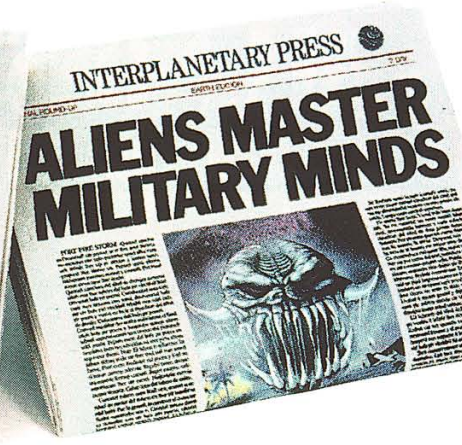
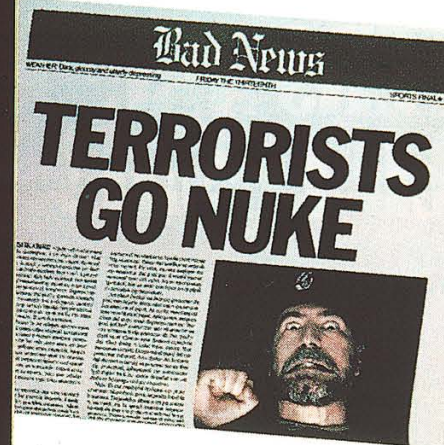


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